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ABSTRACT

Intended to help teachers integrate writing instruction with the study of literature, this teaching guide offers a philosophy of writing instruction, describes a procedure for teaching reading and writing lessons, and provides a sequence of writing skills. For various literature selections, the guide defines vocabulary, provides topic discussion questions, reading guide questions, and writing assignments. The following literature is covered: (1) "The Road Not Taken" (Robert Frost); (2) "To An Athlete Dying Young" (A. E. Housman); (3) "Kindly Unhitch That Star, Buddy" (Ogden Nash); (4) "The Tuft of Flowers" (Robert Frost); (5) "Jabberwocky" (Lewis Carroll); (6) "Up from Slavery" (Booker T. Washington); (7) "Contents of the Dead Man's Pockets" (Jack Finney); (8) "By the Waters of Babylon" (Stephen Vincent Benet); (9) "The Gift of the Magi" (O. Henry); (10) "The Cask of Amontillado" (Edgar Allen Poe); (11) "Ex-Basketball Player" (John Updike); (12) "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (James Thurber); (13) "The Old Man and the Sea" (Ernest Hemingway); (14) "Of Mice and Men" (John Steinbeck); (15) "1984" (George Orwell); (16) "To Kill a Mockingbird" (Harper Lee); (17) "Harlem Renaissance and Beyond" (Lorraine Hansberry); (18) "Our Town" (Thornton Wilder); (19) "Death of a Salesman" (Arthur Miller); (20) "The Red Badge of Courage" (Stephen Crane); (21) "Scarlet Letter" (Nathaniel Hawthorne); (22) "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" (Mark Twain); (23) "Macbeth" (William Shakespeare); (24) "Julius Caesar" (William Shakespeare); (25) "Romeo and Juliet" (William Shakespeare); (26) "The Pigman" (Paul Zindel); and (27) "Shane" (Jack Schaefer). (SRT)

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USING LITERATURE-BASED PROMPTS TO TEACH WRITING COMPETENCIES

Directed Reading and Writing Lessons

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PHILOSOPHY OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR WRITING WHEN

they are required to plan before writing

they write frequently for various audiences with different purposes

they are provided with feedback as they write

they see their writing as something that is actually read

they see writing as imaginative and creative

they are provided with specific feedback after they write

they receive criticism from someone other than the teacher

they are provided with no more than five points of criticism in one assignment

they are required to revise

they are given distance between writing and revising

classroom time is spent on task (students engaged in writing), as opposed to the teacher spending classroom time talking about how to write

writing instruction and practice take place on a regular, frequent basis over a long period of time

they are allowed to share their writing with others (e.g., classroom publication, publication in literary magazine or newspaper, posting student writing, reading assignments out loud, peer editing)

USING LITERATURE-BASED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS TO TEACH MARYLAND FUNCTIONAL WRITING COMPETENCIES

Laurence Perrine defines literature as"a shared experience between the writer and the reader." Perrine reminds us that it is through literature that we can gain new experiences, and broaden and deepen past experiences. Since the Maryland Functional Writing Test calls on our students to draw from their personal experiences, we can use an integrated unit of composition-literature study to teach writing competencies and to provide our students the opportunity to gain new and enhance past experiences. We can also improve our students' vocabulary and reading skills by using directed reading and writing lessons as we teach writing and literature.

Using MFWT prompts or similar experience-based prompts,teach your students a few of the basic writing competencies during the first two to four weeks of the semester. These competencies might include ways to locate within the prompt the directions and specifications for the writing assignment; the basic elements of narrative and explanatory compositions; and the various activities in which a writer engages himself during the composing process, such as thinking, planning, drafting, sharing, and revising.

When you're ready to use the directed reading and writing lessons, follow this procedure:

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Pose three to five discussion questions that your students can answer by drawing from their personal experiences, ideas, or opinions. These questions should be related to the experience in the literature selection, but they should not be worded in such a way that the students would be required to read in order to answer. These questions are designed to motivate. They are intended to help the students to bring into focus past experiences that will help them to relate to and better understand the experience the writer shares with them in the literature selection.

You can pose these questions one at a time, calling on a few students to answer each as you go along. You can also list the questions then allow the students a few minutes to jot down their responses before you have a class discussion. You might also consider having the students work in small discussion groups before your class discussion.

VOCABULARY: List three to five vocabulary words from the selection that the students might find difficult or confusing. Define these words as they are used in the selection.

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS: List three to five guide questions for the students to answer as they read the selection. These questions should be related to the experience in the literature selection.

READING: Allow the students appropriate time to read the selection. Short selections, especially poems, should be read aloud in class.

ANSWER THE READING GUIDE QUESTIONS: Have the class discuss their answers to the guide questions. Review portions of the selection that might have caused confusion. After you answer these questions bring into clear focus the experience in the selection. Discuss that which is gained, lost, or learned through the experience. Have the students discuss their personal and emotional responses to the experience in the selection.

WRITING: Give your students a writing prompt that directs them to write about the experience in the literature selection and that allows them to draw from the personal experiences that they discussed before they read.

Insist that your students use a process approach each time they write. They should plan, draft, share, and revise.

Also, have your students focus on at least one functional writing competency each time they write. Sequence the writing competency skills so that by the end of the semester after numerous writing activities your students will have developed into competent, experienced writers. Use the following sequence of skills or modify it to meet the needs and ability level of your students.

SEQUENCE OF WRITING SKILLS

The students will be able to:

Write on topic

Write to the assigned audience

Develop a narrative topic with specific details

Elaborate on narrative details by showing emotional responses to situations and events in the narrative

Avoid gaps in the sequence of events in the narrative

Organize a narrative in chronological, sequential order, telling how the event began, what happened during the event, and how it ended.

Achieve unity in a narrative by eleminating extraneous details

Achieve coherence in writing by using a variety of appropriate transitions

Develop an explanatory topic with specific details

Elaborate on explanatory details by showing emotional and personal reactions and responses to the situation being explained

Organize an explanatory composition appropriately. (From most to least important detail, from least to most important detail, or cause and effect: cause of problem, effects of problem, and suggested solutions to the problem.)

Achieve unity in an explanatory composition by eleminating extraneous details

Use appropriate topic and clincher sentences in explanatory paragraphs

Achieve coherence in explanatory writing by using a variety of transitional and linking expressions

Achieve competency in conventional spelling, capitalization, and punctuation

Eliminate fragments and run-on sentences

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

"The Road Not Takén" by Robert Frost

VOCABULARY:

1. diverged- branched off; separated; moved in different directions

2. undergrowth- small trees, shrubs, etc. that grow beneath large trees in woods or forests

3. trodden- (pp. of tread) to trample on or upon: to step or walk upon

4. hence- from this time, after now

5. symbol- an object, character, or idea that represents something larger and more significant than itself

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Recall a time when you had to make a difficult choice between two things you wanted to do or had to do. What were the choices? What was your decision?

2. What make the decision difficult?

3. How was your life affected or changed by the choice you made?

4. In what ways might your life be different had you made the other choice?

5. Have you ever regreted your decision or wished you had the chance to go back and make the other choice just to see how things would turn out? Why or why not?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the speaker pause in his travels?

2. What makes his choice difficult?

3. Does the speaker feel that he made the wrong choice in taking the road "less traveled by"? If not, why will he sigh? What does he regret?

4. Why will the choice between two roads that seem very much alike make such a difference many years later?

5. By the last stanza we realize that the poet is talking about something more than the choice of paths in a wood because it will make a great difference on the speaker's life and he will remember it with a sigh "ages and ages hence." What is represented or symbolized by the divided path and the choice the speaker must make?

"The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost

Suppose a magazine is offering $25 for articles written by teenagers. The article must be about a difficult decision. Write a paragraph for other teenagers explaining a difficult decision you had to make.

Before you begin writing, think about a difficult decision you have faced and what you decided to do. Think about what made this difficult and why you made the decision. Think about the result of your decision.

Now, write a paragraph for other teenagers explaining a difficult decision you had to make.

Maryland State Department of Education
1985 MFWT

"To An Athelete Dying Young" by A. E. Housman

VOCABULARY:

1. renown- being widely acclaimed and highly honored
2. lintel- the horizontal beam above a doorway
3. threshold- the end of a runway or a place of beginning
4. laureled- trees or shrubs used to crown victors
5. rout- to defeat; a defeat

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you define glory?
2. When an athlete wins, how long does he live in glory?
3. How does losing affect a person who was once the best?
4. How is the death of a young person usually thought of?
5. When someone dies young, how are they remembered?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. How does the poet feel about the young athlete's death?
2. What is "the road all runners come?"
3. Why is he a "smart lad?"
4. Why, according to the speaker, is glory so short lived?
5. How does this athlete live on, even though he is dead?

"To An Athlete Dying Young" by A. E. Housman

After reading "To an Athlete Dying Young" by A. E. Housman, write a few paragraphs to a friend describing a person in history or that you have known who has died at a young age.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about how the athlete in the poem died without losing his glory and how he will always be remembered as being young. Think about how your example parallels the poem. How do you remember the person? did this person die without losing his glory?

Now write a few paragraphs to a friend describing a person in history or a person you have known who died at a young age.

"To an Athelete Dying Young" by A. E. Housman

Suppose you were once a successful athlete who had achieved fame, but with age were replaced by new athletes. Write a letter to a friend telling your feelings.

Consider what sport you were a star of. Think about how you felt before you were famous, while you were famous, and your feelings now. You might think aobut how others treated you, and what you future may be like.

Now write a letter to a friend telling your feelings of being a forgotten athlete.

"Kindly Unhitch That Star, Buddy" by Ogden Nash

VOCABULARY:

1. temperament- a person's nature or disposition
2. contemptuous- scornful, showing the feeling that something is mean, low, or worthless
3. archangels- angels of the highest order
4. humanity- human beings taken as a group, people
5. cherubin/seraphin- ranks of angels

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do people act when they try to become successful?
2. Are they better off when they try to become successful than they were before?
3. How would people feel if they reached all their goals?
4. What are some of the ways in which people try to become successful? Are all of these ways good? Why or why not?
5. How do you feel when you successfully reach a goal? How do you feel when you don't reach one?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. What examples does the poet give in the first four lines that show the difference between a success and a failure?
2. In lines 7-12, what does the poet think are the correct ways for people to achieve success?
3. In these same lines, do people actually follow those ways? If not, how do they try to achieve their goals?
4. If they reached success through any of these ways, would they be better off than they were?
5. In line 16, what does the poet say is the reason that people try to be successful?

"Kindly Unhitch That Star, Buddy" by Ogden Nash

You have just finished reading "Kindly Unhitch That Star, Buddy" by Ogden Nash, and the poem causes you to think about the goal that you want to succeed at most of all. Write a letter to a friend to tell him about this goal.

Before you write, think about what your goal is, why you want to succeed at this goal, when you will begin to work toward it, the steps you will take to achieve it, and when you hope to complete it.

Now write a letter to a friend which tells him about your most important goal.

"The Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost

VOCABULARY:

1. tuft- a clump
2. whetstone- stone used to sharpen tools
3. tremulous- showing fear
4. scythe- tool used for mowing
5. bared- bring into veiw, reveal

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you like to spend time observing nature? What do you do when observing?
2. How would a farmer cut hay and grass before the invention of a tractor?
3. Have you ever watched a butterfly, especially when it is near a flower? What did you notice about it? What is special and noticeable about them?
4. Would you rather work with someone on a job or by yourself? Why?
5. Do you think people in general do things only for themselves, or do they hope that others will benefit from it?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the narrator doing in the field?
2. How does the narrator feel (his attitude) as the poem begins?
3. What does the mower leave uncut? How and why does the speaker notice this? Why is it significant? How does it become an unintentional message to the speaker?
4. What does the narrator mean in the last two lines when he says, "Men work together, ...whether they work together or apart."?
5. How does the narrator feel as the poem ends?

"The Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost

In the poem "The Tuft of Flowers" by Robert Frost, the speaker begins to observe and comtemplate things in nature and, as a result, changes his veiw of the relationship between man and work. In a well organized essay to your teacher explain how the attitude of the speaker changes from the beginning of the poem to the end.

Before you start writing, you might want to consider how the speaker feels as the poem begins, and the details that show his feelings. Also, think about the events that happen during the poem that affect the speaker. Recall how the attitude of the speaker changes by the end of the poem and the details that show this.

Now in a well organized essay for your teacher, explaining the change in the speaker's attitude about the relationship between man and work in Robert Frost's poem "The Tuft of Flowers."

"Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll

VOCABULARY:

1. chortled- to chuckle or snort
2. mimsy- miserable and flimsy
3. slithy- slimy and lithe
4. toves- lizard
5. brilling- broiling things for dinner

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is an epic poem?
2. What is more important in literature, what is said or how it is said?
3. Have you ever seen the vocabulary words before?
4. What do you notice about the vocabulary words?
5. Why do you suppose the words were made up?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. What are the three main characters involved in the poem?
2. What does the father warn the son about the jabberwock?
3. Does the boy kill the jabberwock? If so, how?
4. How does the boy describe the jabberwock?
5. What does the boy do before he fights the jabberwock?

"Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll

Suppose you fought a monster like the jabberwock. Write a paragraph to tell future generations of your adventure.

Before you begin writing, think about why you fought the monster, how you fought it, if you won or lost, and what happened as a result of your victory or loss.

Now write a paragraph to future generations telling them about your adventure.

Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington

VOCABULARY:

1. confront- face, especially in challenge
2. persuading- to influence by argurment, to argure on reason into a certain course of action
3. prospective- likely to be or become, expected
4. garment- article of clothing
5. practically- almost, very nearly

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever felt abandoned by your family and friends? Explain.
2. Have you ever not had enough money to do something you wanted to do? Explain.
3. Explain what slavery is.
4. Do you think slavery was right? Explain.
5. Can you think of any modern practices that parallel slavery? What are they?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Washington have to sell his coat to raise money?
2. Does Washington ask anyone for money?
3. Do any others in the same town as Washington have the same financial problems that he does?
4. Why is Washington so depressed at the end of the story?
5. Does Washington have all he needs to spend the summer at school? What does he need?

Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington

After you have finished reading the story, write the next half of it. Explain how you would solve the problem if you were Booker T. Washington. The finished story will be read by other students like you.

Be sure to consider how you got the money, who gave it to you, and what you used it for.

Now, thinking you are Booker T. Washington, write the rest of the story for the other students explaining how Washington solves his problem.

"Contents of the Dead Man's Pockets" by Jack Finney

VOCABULARY:

1. circlet- a small circle
2. davenport- a long couch with a back and arms
3. deftness- swiftness, nimbleness
4. externally- from the outside or another point of view
5. memorandum- a note to aid one's memory/for future use

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some situations that you see frequently where you must decide on doing something for yourself or doing something for someone else?
2. What do you think is a good way to help decide what to do when you must make a decision on what to do in this case?
3. What are some things you consider while making this choice?
4. What problems, other than the obvious conflict, usually arise?
5. Which people are you most likely to have conflicts, such as this one, with? Why?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. Why doesn't Tom Benecke go to the movies with his wife?
2. Why does Tom feel that the yellow piece of paper was so important that he should crawl out on the ledge to retrieve it?
3. At what point does Tom realize that the paper is not worth risking his life for?
4. At what point does Ton realize that his work is not important as is his relationship with his wife?
5. Why does Tom finally decide not to work on his paper, but to go find his wife?

"Contents of the Dead Man's Pockets" by Jack Finney

In "Contents of the Dead Man's Pockets," Tom Benecke must choose between going out to the movies with his wife, and staying home to finish his work. Remember a time when you had to make a choice between doing something for another person and doing something for yourself. Write a paragraph telling a friend about this conflict and how you dealt with it.

Before you begin writing, you might want to think about the specific conflict, who was involved, how the conflict started, what factors influenced your decision, what you finally decided to do, and how you felt about it afterwards.

Now write a paragraph telling your friend about a time when you had to make a choice between doing something for yourself and doing something for someone else.

"By The Waters of Babylon" by Stephen Vincent Bénet

VOCABULARY:

1. chariots- n. horse drawn two-wheeled cart used in ancient times for racing, war, etc.
2. purification- n. to rid of impurities; sin or any kind of polution or corruption
3. bade- v. bid, command or ask
4. chamber- n. room
5. enchanted- adj. has a spell cast over, as by mask; bewitched
6. slain- v. to have been killed by violent means
7. ante-room- n. waiting room; a room through which another room is entered

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think the world will have a nuclear holocaust? What will the future be like?
2. Have you ever had to do anything that you thought was right but was against the rules?
3. Do you think our society is wicked or evil? Do you think our society will be punished?
4. Do you believe in the super natural and why? Why do people use the super natural to explain things that they can't explain?
5. Do you think we "eat our knowledge too fast"? Is man progressing too quickly?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. When did you first realize the story was set in the future?
2. Why do you think the boy thinks that gods lived in the city, but then decides that they were men?
3. Why do you think that the boy's people were forbidded to go into the city or eat food from the enchanted jars and boxes?
4. Describe the city the boy visits.
5. What is the lesson the story teaches?

"By The Waters of Babylon" by Stephen Vincent Bénet

Suppose, as many people are afraid, there is a nuclear holocaust? What will the survivers be like and act like? Write a story about a group of people that have survived after a world-wide nuclear holocaust. Be creative and don't forget to use all of your senses. Write as though you are writing a short story for a book.

You may want to write the story from a first person point of view, such as in "By The Waters of Babylon." Think about how the survivers live and what they know or have learned from man's past mistakes.

Now write your creative story of the future about the survivors of a nuclear holocaust. Try to think of new ideas, and not copy from other movies and/or books. Be creative, have fun, and good luck!

"The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry

VOCABULARY:

1. bulldoing- to force or frighten by threats, bully
2. magi- wise men who came bearing gifts from the east
3. fob- small pocket in the front of men's trousers for a watch
4. ravages- acts of violent destruction
5. vestibule- a small entrance hall or room

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so important in our society to have gifts on special occasions?
2. Would you be willing to sacrifice something very precious in order to get a gift for someone else?
3. Have any gifts that you've received been in vain?
4. How do you feel about receiving gifts? Would you be unsatisfied without them?
5. Have you ever changed something about yourself (such as hair, values, etc.) that you were later ashamed of?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the description of the house important?
2. What was the result of their good intentions?
3. How much money does Jim make a week?
4. How did Della buy the chain?
5. Who was the original owner of the watch?

"The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry

Suppose that you are Mr. or Mrs. Dillingham Young and you wish to give advice on gift-giving from your own recent experience. You feel that your advice would be beneficial to your younger cousin.

Before you write, you may want to consider, based on your experience, what you view as the most important aspect of gift-giving, and your particular feelings regarding it. What wisdom would you want to share with him or her? Think of what specific events from your experience you would tell to clearly illustrate your feelings.

Now write a letter to a young cousin giving advice on gift-giving.

"The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allen Poe

VOCABULARY:

1. catacombs- underground cemetery, tunnels and rooms with tombs
2. trowel- a flat-bladed tool used to spread mortar
3. fettered- chained
4. jest- a joke or witty remark
5. retribution- pay back, revenge

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel that it is right to take revenge if someone has offended you?
2. Would you feel guilty after taking revenge on them?
3. How do you feel about tricking someone? Would you leave them clues or would you completely surprise them?
4. Have you ever hurt anyone's feelings without realizing it?
5. If someone hurt your feelings, what would you do? Would you punish them physically? Tell them about it? Or overlook the whole thing?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. Where does Montresor take Fortunato?
2. What do they see there? Describe it.
3. Why doesn't Fortunado turn back?
4. Where do they finally stop?
5. What happens to Fortunado?

"The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allen Poe

Suppose that you are a ghost in the wine cellar who picks up the clues that Montésor leaves. Write a note to Fortunado, warning him of the danger and suggest to him a way to prevent it.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about the clues that reveal Montresor's plan. Think of what they are and how they reveal what is going to happen to Fortunado. Remember specific details from the story that will convince Fortunado that he must keep himself from danger and think of a way in which he can prevent his fate.

Now write a letter to Fortunado, telling what clues to look for and suggest a way in which he can prevent his unfortunate fate.

"Ex-Basketball Player" by John Updike

VOCABULARY:

1. trolley- a pulley or truck traveling on an overhead track and serving to support and move a suspended object
2. squat- to crouch down or cower
3. bucket- to make a basket
4. coiled- to move in or follow a winding course
5. luncheonette- a lunchroom or restaraunt where light meals are served

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does it take to be an athlete?
2. What does it take to be successful in sports?
3. What type of obstacles do athletes run into?
4. What type of goals do athletes set?
5. What happens to old athletes?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS"

1. What do people think when they see Flick working at a gas station?
2. Why does Flick work at a gas station?
3. Do you think all athletes are the same?
4. After reading this poem, did your opinion about athletes change? How did you feel?
5. What type of image do you get at the end of the poem?

"Ex-Basketball Player" by John Updike

Write two paragraphs to a friend telling him about an athlete you know. Tell your friend about this athlete's past and present life.

Before you begin writing, you may want to think about Flick Webb's life as a basketball player. You may also want to think about these questions: What were some of his accomplishments? How long have you known him? What are some of his strengths? After thinking about his past life, you might also want to think about how he has changed, did he change for better or for worse? Remember to "show and tell."

Now write two paragraphs to a friend telling him about an athlete you know.

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber

VOCABULARY:

1. bicarbonate- H_2CO_3; carbonate of an acid; baking soda
2. cur- a mongrel or inferior dog; a worthless snarling fellow
3. inscrutable- incapable of being searched into and understood; incomprehensible; mysterious.
4. pandemonium- chaos; turmoil
5. referendum- practice of referring measures paddes or proposed by the legislative body to the electorate for approval or rejection.

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **How often do you fantasize?**
2. **What do you fantasize about?**
3. **Are you the "hero" of your fantasies?**
4. **How are your fantasies influenced by your surroundings?**
5. **Is there a difference between fantasy and reality?**

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. **What does Walter Mitty imagine himself to be in each fantasy?**
2. **What two items does Walter Mitty need to buy at the store?**
3. **Why does Walter Mitty need overshoes?**
4. **How does Walter Mitty fix the anesthizer?**
5. **Why does Walter Mitty think servicemen are so cocky?**

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber

Suppose that while sitting in class you become bored and start to fantasize. Write a paragraph to your classmates describing your fantasy.

Before you begin writing, you might want to think about who you would be- a doctor, a scientist, a firefighter, or an athlete; what you do; what started the fansasy; and how it would end.

Now write a paragraph to your classmates describing your fantsasy.

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

VOCABULARY:

1. Gaff- a strong hook or spear used for pulling in large fish.
2. Phosphoresence- act or slow process of giving out light without burning or by very slow burning that seems not to give out heat.
3. Iridescent- displaying colors like those of a rainbow.
4. Coagulated- changed from a liquid to a thinckened mass; thickened.
5. Gelatinous- of or like jelly or gelatin.

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Can a person be an enemy and a friend at the same time? Can something be both good and bad? Explain your answers. (lead to the sea being both)
2. What is your definition of a hero? (lead to the Hemingway hero)
3. What do you take into consideration when you form an opinion about a person? (lead to the five ways to characterize a character that an author uses)
4. When you hear the title The Old Man and the Sea, what do you think the novel is about? What kind of words come to mind to describe the topic of the novel?
5. What is THEME? What are some types of themes used by authors? (lead to themes in The Old Man and the Sea)

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. How long has Santiago gone without catching a fish?
2. Why does Santiago see the sea as being feminine and not masculine? Show and tell.
3. Who is the old man's hero, and how does he know about this hero? Why does he admire him so much?
4. Why wouldn't Manolin's father let him fish with Santiago anymore?
5. How are Santiago and DiMaggio alike?

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

Every human on this earth has struggles and tests of endurance like Santiago's in The Old Man and the Sea. These struggles and tests may destroy a man but cannot defeat him. In a well-developed essay for your teacher, show how Santiago continually shows this to be true.

Before writing the essay, take into consideration Santiago's physical appearance before, during, and after his struggle with the fish. Also consider his attitude at this time concerning his life and this test.

Now write an essay, for your teacher, showing that Santiago is a good example of a man being destroyed but not defeated.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

VOCABULARY:

1. imperiously- in a commanding or dominant way.
2. mottled- surface with colored spots or blotches.
3. bindle- a bundle, usually of bedding, carried by a hobo.
4. grizzled- sprinkled or streaked with gray.
5. swamper- general assistant; handy man, helper.

TOPIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever had dreams that have been ruined? What were they? How did you feel?
2. What was the Depression?
3. How were people's dreams shattered during the Depression?
4. Do you think it is important to have dreams? Why?
5. What is the American dream?

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS:

1. How are George and Lennie different from the other men?
2. What characters in the story have dreams? What are those dreams? What has happened to them?
3. Why is Crooks bitter?
4. Why does Curley's wife always talk to the men?
5. Why can't the other men understand George's sadness about killing Lennie?

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

In Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, many of the characters have dreams. Write an essay for your teacher explaining the characters' dreams and their importance.

Before you start writing, you might first want to think about the effect of the time period in America and its people's dreams. Secondly, think about what each character's dream is. Then, you might want to consider how that dream turns out, the result, and its effects on the character.

Now write an essay for your teacher explaining the characters' dreams in Of Mice and Men.

TWENTIETH CENTURY NOVEL

1984

Suppose you are a prole in George Orwell's world of Oceania. You have just come across Winston's diary in an old curiosity shop and you are fascinated by the things he writes. You have just come to Winston's passage which asserts "If there is any hope, it lies with the proles!" You wonder, will the proles ever rebel? Write a passage in your own diary which speculates on that question.

Before you start writing you might want to consider what the life of the proles is like in Oceania, what demands are made on them, how the government treats them, what they value in life. Then you might want to think about what they might gain or lose if they rebel and whether they have the ability to rebel or not. Finally, you might want to think about the form of Winston's diary and whether a prole's diary might be similar or different.

Now, write a passage from the diary of a prole who has just read WInston Smith's ideas and is reacting to whether there is any hope that the proles will ever rebel.

MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

To Kill A Mockingbird

Pretend that you are a reporter for the magazine American Dreams. Your assignment is to travel to Maycomb County, Alabama, going back in time to the 1930's, the time of To Kill A Mockingbird. You are to write an essay for the magazine about one problem preventing the people in Maycomb County, described in To Kill A Mockingbird, from attaining the American Dream.

Before you begin writing, select one problem as your focus. Define the problem in you first paragraph. In the second paragraph tell how that problem has prevented white adults from reaching their goals. In the third paragraph tell how the problem has affected the children. In the fourth paragraph tell how the problem has prevented blacks in the novel from achieving the American Dream. In the final paragraph conclude the essay, explaining your thoughts on the problem and offering a solution.

Now write your essay describing how one problem has prevented the people of 1930 Maycomb County from reaching the American Dream.

Note: Be sure to use several specific examples for each body paragraph. Explain the examples well so that even readers unfamiliar with To Kill A Mockingbird will understand the extent of the problem.

MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

"Harlem Renaissance and Beyond"

Suppose you were a gifted, young black writer, who, like Lorraine Hansberry, had terminal cancer, and you were given only a year or two to live. You must decide whether your last writing efforts will be directed toward purely racial issues, or toward more universal topics. Then you must write a memo to your publisher informing him of you decision and your reasons for that decision.

As you plan, think through your decision. Will you choose one position or the other, or will you somehow arrive at a compromise? State your reasons and support them with any examples from the filmstrip that you feel apply. Think of what you would like most to accomplish in the time you have left.

Now, write a memo to your publisher explaining your approach to your writing.

MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

OUR TOWN

Suppose you are one of the Men/Women Among the Dead in the graveyard of Grover's Corners, and you are given an opportunity to write a letter to Emily while she is still in high school. You want to help her understand life and how to live it in the time she has remaining. You may quote anyone in the play.

First, recall the ideas that Thornton Wilder has included in his play. Think of examples from life to illustrate those ideas. Arrange your ideas in the order you wish to present them to Emily.

Begin with a short paragraph explaining the purpose of your letter to Emily. Follow this with your main ideas and examples. Close with a brief paragraph summarizing your advice.

Now, write a letter to Emily to help her better understand how to live the remainder of her life.

MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Death of a Salesman

Suppose you have been asked to speak at Willy Loman's funeral. You are to describe Willy's life using three dominant American values important to him.

Before the funeral you must organize your speech in a five--paragraph essay. Write an introductory paragraph describing Willy and stating the three values you have chosen. In each of the three body paragraphs illustrate the value using what Willy says, what Willy does, what others say about him, and how others treat him. You may use any other details from the play which show the values you have chosen. Your fifth paragraph should conclude your funeral speech.

Now write a five-paragraph essay that will be presented at Willy Loman's funeral.

Note: Use order of importance in organizing your three body paragraphs.

SURVEY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

The Red Badge of Courage

Suppose that you are to write a couple of paragraphs about Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage which compare Henry's initial matruity level to the level that he achieves at the end of the novel. Write at least two paragraphs explaining this change.

Before you begin writing, think about things that would indicate Henry's maturity. Consider Henry's views on battle both before and after he has experienced it. Also consider changes in Henry's words and actions due to the battles.

Now write at least two well organized paragraphs in which you discuss Henry Flemming's growth in The Red Badge of Courage.

SURVEY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

SCARLET LETTER

Suppose you are one of Arthur Dimmesdale's fellow ministers. You have discovered his terrible secret and have confronted him with the truth. You accuse him, in a letter, not only of the sin, but also of being a hypocrite.

Before you begin writing, you should consider the meaning of hypocrisy and how it applies to Arthur Dimmesdale. You might want to think about examples of specific actions that would brand Arthur a hypocrite.

Now, write a letter to Arthur confronting him with his secret and his hypocritical behavior, warning Arthur that unless he resolves the problem himself, you will be forced to act upon the truth.

SURVEY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

In The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Huck wants to be friends with Jim but at first feels he can't because of society's discrimination against blacks. Write a paragraph describing a time when you wanted to be friends with someone but were afraid to because of the way others veiwed that person.

Before writing, consider these things: where and when you first met this person, your first reaction to that person, and the reason why you felt you couldn't be friends.

After planning, write your paragraph about the friendship that couldn't happen.

SHAKESPEARE

MACBETH

Suppose you are Ross and are relating what happened at the banquet. Write a letter to Macduff describing what you saw.

Before you begin, you may wish to consider what you saw and heard, Macbeth's behavior, Lady Macbeth's reaction to it, and her abrupt dismissal of the guests.

Now write a letter to Macduff describing the events of the banquet.

ENGLISH II

Julius Caesar

Suppose you have just won a trip through time, sponsored by your local Shakespeare club. You, as a winner, get to visit Rome in 44 B.C.. You will arrive on the Feast of Lupercalia, just in time to see Caesar returning from Spain. You decide to change the course of Julius Caesar and history by writing a letter to Brutus forewarning him of the dangerous consequences of joining the conspiracy.

Be sure to include specific details (actions and quotes) explaining what Cassius will say and do to manipulate Brutus to join, explaining how joining will change Brutus, and explaining how joining the conspiracy will change Rome.

Now write your letter to Brutus, warning him of the dangers of joining the conspiracy.

NOTE: Be sure to use friendly letter format. Be persuasive. Complete a plan, rough draft, and final draft.

ENGLISH I

ROMEO AND JULIET

Suppose you have been asked to report the events of the street fight in Act I, scene 1 in Romeo and Juliet. Write an article for the Verona Times newspaper describing what you heard and saw.

Before you begin writing you may want to think about when and where the fight took place, what happened during the fight, how the street fight got started, who started it, the names of those who joined the fight and the reasons they joined the fight. Also think about who stopped the fight and how those involved will be punished in the future.

Now write a newspaper article for the Verona Times reporting the events of the street fight in the opening scene of Romeo and Juliet. Be sure you answer the questions: who? what? when? where? why? how?

ENGLISH I

The Pigman

One of the themes in The Pigman is the difficulty of the transition from childhood to adulthood. Part of Lorraine's and John's confusion about growing up was caused by their reactions to the adults they knew. Write a paragraph in which you compare and contrast John and Lorraine's attitudes.

Before you begin writing, consider John and Lorraine's attitudes toward Mr. Pignati, their parents, and their teachers. How were John and Lorraine's attitudes similar and how were they different?

Now write the paragraph in which you discuss the difference and similarities between John and Lorraine's reactions to the adults they knew.

ENGLISH I

SHANE

Bobby has overheard Marion and Shane talking on the front porch. Based on the conversation he has heard, Bobby becomes worried about the relationship between his mother and Shane. After pondering the situation for some time, Bobby turns to his teacher for advice. You and a partner are to write for your classmates the dialogue between Bobby and the teacher.

Before you begin writing, think about the characters of Marion and Shane. How do you think their relationship will turn out? How will Bobby's family be affected? What are Bobby's reasons for worrying? Decide what the teacher will advise Bobby to do in this situation.

Now team with a partner and write the dialogue between Bobby and his teacher.